

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 079658

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS , FROM ROGERS FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, CS

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ODUBER

1. THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF A MEMORANDUM I HAVE
SENT TO THE SECRETARY DESCRIBING MY MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT ODUBER IN NEW YORK ON MARCH 28. THE FULL TEXT
OF THE MEMO WILL BE POUCHED WITH MY MONTHLY LETTER. OUR
DISCUSSION REVOLVED AROUND THE THEMES OF TORRIJOS/CASTRO
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AND THE CARIBBEAN.

2. ACCORDING TO ODUBER, THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF COSTA RICA, COLUMBIA, VENEZUELA, AND INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, PERU, MET ON MARCH 27 TO ANNOUNCE THE CANCELLATION OF THE AMPHICTYONIC CONGRESS. TORRIJOS DECIDED TO CANCEL THE CONGRESS IN ORDER (1) TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT AND APPEARANCE OF DIVISIVENESS WHICH WOULD HAVE RESULTED IF SOME OF THE SOUTHERN CONE PRESIDENTS FAILED TO COME -- AND THIS SEEMED LIKELY -- BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE BY CASTRO; AND (2) TO AVOID A PANAMA/CUBA LINK IN U.S. PUBLIC OPINION WHICH WOULD PROVIDE AMMUNITION FOR U.S. CONSERVATIVES AND COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT CANAL NEGOTIATIONS.

3. I FIND THIS ENCOURAGING. TORRIJOS CONCERN SHARED BY THE COSTA RICANS, COLOMBIANS, AND VENEZUELANS OVER THE DELIVERY OF THE TREATY ISSUE SHOWS A SOPHISTICATION ABOUT OUR POLITICAL PROCESS WHICH HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN EVIDENT IN THE AREA. IT IS ALSO APPARENT THAT THE COLOMBIANS, VENEZUELANS, COSTA RICANS -- AND PERHAPS EVEN THE PERUVIANS, ALTHOUGH ODUBER'S REPORT ON THIS WAS SKIMPY -- ARE NOT DEVELOPING ANY NEW ILLUSIONS ABOUT CASTRO. FINALLY, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, I BELIEVE, CANCELLATION OF THE CONGRESS WILL BE SEEN AS A SIGNIFICANT MOVE IN THE LATIN AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC CHESS GAME. CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ AND TORRIJOS PUT A LOT OF PERSONAL CHIPS ON IT. IT WILL HARDLY BE LOST ON LATIN AMERICA THAT CANCELLATION WAS DUE TO CASTRO. THUS, ELSEWHERE AND IN HAVANA, IT WILL BE OBVIOUS THAT CASTRO'S ADVENTURISM IN AFRICA IS COSTING HIM DIPLOMATICALLY IN THIS HEMISPHERE. AN ADDED BONUS TO THE CANCELLATION IS THAT WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. WE MUST MAINTAIN THIS PRECIOUS DISTANCE FROM THE CANCELLATION DECISION. THE LESS SAID BY US ABOUT IT, THE BETTER.

4. THE CARIBBEAN. ODUBER EXPLAINED HIS RECENT VISIT TO JAMAICA IN TERMS OF HIS CONCERN THAT CASTRO'S EFFORTS IN AFRICA MIGHT DRIVE A WEDGE IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN BETWEEN THE BLACK FORMERLY BRITISH COLONIES AND THE LATIN STATES. ODUBER REPRESENTS THAT MANLEY, WHILE ACCLAIMING

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CUBAN ACTION IN AFRICA, IS OPPOSED TO CUBAN INTRUSIONS ANYWHERE IN THE CARIBBEAN OR LATIN AMERICA. ODUBER RECOGNIZED THAT GUYANA MIGHT HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW. HE FEELS, AS DO HIS FRIENDS IN CARACAS, BOGOTA AND ELSEWHERE IN CENTRAL AMERICA, THAT AN EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO BUILD BRIDGES TO JAMAICA. HE HAS ARRANGED TO HAVE TORRIJOS VISIT MANLEY AND TO HAVE SOMOZA EXTEND AN INVITATION TO MANLEY TO COME TO NICARAGUA AND PERHAPS,

OTHER COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

5. BELIZE. ODUBER DISCUSSED BELIZE WITH MANLEY AND HE AND I TOUCHED ON IT. HE HOPES THAT THE BRITISH WILL NOT PULL OUT OR GRANT INDEPENDENCE JUST NOW, FEELING THAT THE MORE DELAY THE BETTER. HE IS MILDLY HOPEFUL THAT GUATEMALA WILL BE ABLE TO STOMACH BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE LATER. ODUBER CONFIRMED THAT THE GUATEMALANS THINK WE HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN LONDON; SO WE CAN EXPECT FURTHER REQUESTS FOR INTERCESSION FROM THEM.

6. THE OAS. ODUBER WANTS US TO TALK FURTHER WITH FACIO ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, OUR PROPOSALS FOR RE-STRUCTURING AND THE AGENDA OF ECONOMIC ISSUES.

7. VESCO. I DID NOT TALK VESCO. I INTEND TO DO THIS WHEN ODUBER CALLS ON HIS WAY BACK.

8. TRADE. WE ALSO DID NOT DISCUSS MEAT EXPORTS, GSP AND COSTA RICAN SUGAR. KISSINGER

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